

Staff Summary

The Committee was asked to discuss three topics:

1. Identify missing issues from the charges contained in the study authorizing language, SB 5441.
2. What are the key issues to focus on?
3. What are transition issues we could focus on early in our study work?

Here is a summary of the discussions. Please note that the numbering of the items is not to represent any priority but to make it easier to refer to the items during subsequent discussion.

OVERARCHING THEMES

1. Create a framework of expectations/assumptions about what the educational system should accomplish.
2. Create a framework for accountability.
3. Create a system that is responsive to consumers and easy to navigate.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS (CLARIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS) RELATED TO SB 5441

Fiscal issues

- Examine methods of determining the cost of instruction for various programs and to meet regional higher education and training needs
- Identify costs associated with increasing access to baccalaureate degrees
- Identify ways for public universities to serve the graduate needs, particularly doctoral level, of students in the branch campus system
- Identify opportunities for increasing partnerships with business
 - Programs that provide customized training for businesses (such as the Job Skills Program that employers help pay for)
 - Shared investment/joint programs in areas that produce skilled employees with "high demand/high cost" degrees and certificates
- Examine consequences of increased dependence on part-time faculty
- Identify ways to better use public dollars in educating students who have passed the 10th grade WASL to prepare them to be successful in work, society and higher education
 - Increase rigor in the last 2 years of high school
 - Create meaningful internships to help students choose careers that work for them
 - Reduce remediation in community colleges and 4 year schools
 - Reduce curriculum duplication (don't teach the same thing over and over)

Enrollment and access issues

- Recommend strategies for increasing baccalaureate degree opportunities
- Develop incentives for students to engage in programs that meet workforce needs
- Ensure access to high quality English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education programs
- Identify ways to assist tribal communities in developing tribal colleges and universities

Transition issues

- Create a common transfer and articulation plan for community colleges and baccalaureate institutions
 - Identify and solve specific credit transfer issues for academic transfers from 2- to 4-year degree programs (e.g., Direct Transfer Agreements, Major-ready 2-year degrees for specific baccalaureate programs; Bachelors of Applied Technology degrees and transfer agreements)
 - Identify ways to improve information and marketing to help citizens move efficiently among education and training institutions, and into graduate or professional schools, based on their own education and career goals
 - Provide accurate and reliable information to students and families
 - Develop electronic/web-based transcripts and information about degree requirements at all colleges and universities in the state
 - Inform public about types, locations, costs of institutions (public, private, academic, career training) and financial aid and grant opportunities
- Examine college admission, retention and completion rates, and job placement for various groups of students (e.g., by income, race/ethnicity, adult learners, urban/rural, English language learners) Define what a diploma, certificate, or degree prepares a student for (e.g., to communicate and solve problems generally; perform a specific job; move into further education and training?)
- Identify ways to make it easier for adult learners and part-time students to move into and out of college and training
- Examine ways to provide smooth transitions from college to work
- Identify what knowledge, skills, attributes, and competencies students need in order to succeed in college? How do we assess whether students have mastered them? How do we account for what they learn outside of the school setting (e.g., from parents; from private, community-based or faith-based tutoring programs; through independent learning on the internet or elsewhere)?
- Identify the knowledge, skills, attributes, and competencies students need in order to earn a certificate, or degree from a college or university? How do we account for what students learn in various types of college and non-college settings (e.g., community college, public and private universities, distance learning, on-the-job, independent learning)?

- Identify ways to improve counseling to help high school students think about and develop plans for college and work
- Identify ways to improve communication among K-12, community college, and 4-year systems
- Examine and recommend ways to eliminate misalignment of curriculum and assessments between and among high schools, community colleges and public and private universities
- Recommend opportunities for professional development for faculty so they are better able to adapt to changing instructional needs (based on changes in K-12, the workforce and the economy)

Research issues

- Develop a more analytic approach to data
- Identify options for shared investment/joint projects between state, universities and business for research that creates jobs and benefits businesses
- Identify the research needs of tribal communities and ways that public institutions can be supportive of tribal economic development and tribal social issues

Governance issues

- Review higher education governance as it relates to fiscal policies
- Examine the roles of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Boards of Regents and Boards of Trustees
- Examine roles and missions for each component of the system (e.g., the state; research, regional and community colleges; private institutions; proprietary schools; distance learning providers)
- Examine the roles and responsibilities for participants (e.g., faculty and staff; students; families)
- Examine roles and responsibilities of labor and business